


Braille Monitor



AUGUST, 1976

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

A Publication of the
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND
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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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* * *

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If your wishes are more complex, you may have your attorney communicate with the Berkeley Office for other suggested forms.

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HERE'S TO YOU, MR. RIVES: YOU HAVEN'T GOT THE NAC

Mr. Louis Rives, president of NAC and also head of what is left of the Arkansas Services for the Blind, apparently took offense at our article concerning NAC which appeared in the May 1976 *Monitor*. Mr. Rives has apparently never heard the story of the young lady who said to her date, "I thought I would faint last night when the fellow I was with asked me to kiss him." To which her escort replied, "When you hear what I have to say, you're probably going to have a heart attack."

Mr. Rives says that our article contained erroneous statements and that he would like us to publish both his and Mr. Kossick's letters to set the record straight. Well, we are going to do it. We are also going to publish a letter from Mr. Pogorelc to Mr. Rives, which is also in the nature of setting the record straight.

Mr. Rives, you asked for it. We wonder if you will like it. Your veiled threats about libel and court action trouble us not at all. Truth is always a defense. We would be pleased to meet NAC and you in court. So, here's to you, Mr. Rives: You don't have the NAC.

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION COUNCIL FOR
AGENCIES SERVING THE BLIND AND
VISUALLY HANDICAPPED,
New York, New York, May 24, 1976.

Mr. PERRY SUNDQUIST,
Editor, The Braille Monitor,
Sacramento, California.

DEAR PERRY: In the May, 1976 issue of *The Braille Monitor* you published an article

regarding the meeting of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind (NCSAB) on February 8 and 9 of this year. Unfortunately, the article (entitled "NAC Attempts NCSAB Take-Over") contained a number of erroneous statements regarding various individuals and what occurred. These statements have since been repeated by others and might well be considered libelous of at least one person mentioned.

To correct the record I enclose a copy of a letter written by Rodney J. Kossick, a member of NCSAB who was present at the meetings to which your article referred.

Further to correct the record, I can state that I was also present as a member of NCSAB and that the procedures were not as you reported them.

On February 9, during the second part of the NCSAB meeting, NCSAB President Robert L. Pogorelc presided. Four of the six NCSAB Board members (a majority of the board) were present as well as about twenty other members. The decision taken by NCSAB the previous day to provide NCSAB's moral and financial support to the National Accreditation Council (NAC) and to become an official sponsor of NAC was approved even more strongly when Mr. Pogorelc presided on February 9. On February 8 there were no opposing votes and four abstentions; on February 9 there were no opposing votes and only two abstentions. NCSAB has consistently and with increasing majorities since 1972 voted to support NAC.

Later Mr. Pogorelc was persuaded to call a meeting in Denver—contrary to a directive

passed by the membership in February. Most NCSAB members did not attend this meeting because it violated the membership's directive.

I request that you publish this letter and Mr. Kossick's letter since I am sure you would not knowingly let stand statements carried by your publication which may be libelous.

Sincerely,

LOUIS H. RIVES, Jr.

STATE OF WISCONSIN,
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND
SOCIAL SERVICES,
DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION,
Madison, Wisconsin, May 12, 1976.

It has come to my attention that Mr. Pogorelc has shared with a board member some misinformation about the role of Executive Director Dr. Richard W. Bleecker at the February 8, 1976 meeting of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, a long-time sponsor of the National Accreditation Council.

Since I was present at this meeting as a member and Mr. Pogorelc was present only at a second meeting which he presided following the first meeting, I should like to state these facts.

Both meetings were open meetings in accordance with the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind long-standing custom. Dr. Bleecker had been invited to attend both meetings by several members of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind including some NAC-

accredited members. Because they expected that NCSAB and NAC would be discussed, it was felt that Dr. Bleecker should make himself available for questions if the members so desired.

Dr. Bleecker agreed to attend and did so. In the first meeting he responded to questions and participated as requested. At one point the chair asked for someone to read a section of the bylaws of the National Council of State Agencies for the Blind. Dr. Bleecker complied with the chair request and read the bylaws without editorial comment. At the second meeting, at which Mr. Pogorelc presided, Dr. Bleecker was present, but was not called upon nor did he speak.

Thus, Dr. Bleecker was, in fact, fulfilling his professional responsibility to be available to respond as requested concerning his organization.

It was unfortunate that Mr. Pogorelc received misinformation about what had occurred at a meeting February 8, at which he was not present. However, Mr. Pogorelc did chair the following meeting and the action passed at that meeting reaffirmed what took place at the first meeting.

My own agency is not NAC-accredited and I have no direct relationship to NAC.

I am sending this letter to you in the interest of accuracy and hope that this letter may set the record straight as to the participation of Dr. Bleecker at the NCSAB meetings in Washington, D.C. during February, 1976.

Sincerely,

RODNEY J. KOSSICK,
Director, Bureau for the Blind.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE AGENCIES
FOR THE BLIND, INC.,
Portland, Oregon, June 2, 1976.

Mr. LOU RIVES,
*President, National Accreditation Council,
Little Rock, Arkansas.*

DEAR LOU: It was thoughtful of you to provide me with a copy of the letter in which you take exception to an article in *The Braille Monitor*. When certain action is being attributed to me by others, I appreciate the opportunity to know what is being said.

I have seen a couple of letters from Rod Kossick concerning the events of February 8 and 9 in Washington and I did take the time to respond to one of those letters. I have not yet read the article in *The Braille Monitor* and therefore I am not in a position to comment on the quality of the journalism that article might reflect. However, other published interpretations of the February activities, including a brief item in *The Standard-Bearer*, have impressed me as being a little lacking in accuracy.

Allegations about your organization's attempt to take over the NCSAB do not represent anything I am interested in getting involved with. It seems to me that the less said about that issue, the better for both NAC and the NCSAB. I seriously doubt that a majority of the NAC Board would, if provided with full and accurate information, condone that sort of thing or indulge officers or staff who seemed interested in pursuing those kinds of maneuvers. It would, though, be a matter of legitimate interest to Governors and state legislatures if a private organization in New York, primarily responsive to providers of services and vendors who have a major financial

stake in the operations and policies of state agencies for the blind, seriously endeavored to get control of the primary mechanism through which state agencies achieve effective interchange and expression on a national basis.

Whatever the merits of allegations about "NAC's Attempted Take-Over of the NCSAB," I am personally inclined to regard the prospect of such a take-over as being about as plausible and realistic as an effort by some banana republic to conquer the United States. That is why I find it rather difficult to get excited about the article which appears [in the *Monitor*].

As far as I am concerned, the basic issue on relationships between NAC and the NCSAB is not one of alleged attempts at take-overs. Instead, I regard the fundamental question to be this: how should the two organizations interact so as to assure that issues are fairly determined openly and on their merits, so that people connected with both organizations are afforded an honorable opportunity to acquit themselves of their respective responsibilities, and so as best to advance the real interests of blind individuals on both an immediate and long-range basis?

In relation to this question, it is ridiculous for anyone to pretend that NAC has conducted itself in such a manner as to serve as a high model for accuracy, fairness, decency, openness, and propriety. The fact of the matter is that NAC has, in its relations with the NCSAB, frequently conducted itself in a manner such as to present, at least in my mind, very serious questions as to appropriateness, propriety, and ethics. Perhaps some may wish to deny that NAC has frequently, through covert tactics in which representatives of state agencies have

been provided inaccurate and misleading information outside of the spotlight of a public meeting, injected itself into the internal affairs of the NCSAB. I very seriously doubt, though, that those denials would have very much credence with state agency representatives who have witnessed or been exposed to the process.

It seems to me that the time may be past due for the full NAC Board, as well as everyone else in the field of work for the blind, to consider most carefully those tactics for which some representatives of your organization have exhibited so pronounced an affinity during the past year or so. Those tactics involve the use of misrepresentations, half-truths, innuendo, and information taken out of relevant context. The process involves off-the-record contacts in which misinformation is passed on without an opportunity for factual rebuttal and the opportunity for people to reach their conclusions on the basis of reason and hard evidence. In lieu of reasoned and rational discussion, obvious inflammatory appeals to prejudice, and outright demagoguery are being utilized. This is not appropriate for an organization that purports to exemplify professionalism.

Let me provide you with a few specific examples of what I am talking about.

You are quoted as having made, during the CSAVR meeting this past February, a number of comments which were highly disparaging about me personally, as well as disparaging of a few other people in the NCSAB who do not happen to feel that it is consonant with their duties as state officials to acquiesce blindly in just anything NAC might propose. Although the inaccuracies and insupportability of those statements has since been called to your

attention and although I understand that you have since admitted that you had not even read some of the materials upon which you were basing your defamatory representations about me and others, I am not aware of any responsible or honorable action to this date taken by you or anyone else associated with NAC to correct your errors.

The letter of May 24th to Perry Sundquist is another example of what I am talking about. I think it just a little presumptuous of you to try to categorize the basis and nature of action taken by me in my capacity as president of the NCSAB, and I regard it as the function of myself and the other members of the executive board of the NCSAB to describe the rationale of action undertaken by our organization. If NAC wants to try to place its own public interpretation on NCSAB action, then I suppose that your organization has that prerogative. For NAC representatives not to accord the properly elected officers of the NCSAB the simple courtesy of checking to determine the accuracy of such interpretations, however, does reveal what I must regard as an unacceptable level of arrogance and an entirely demeaning basic attitude about the competencies and responsibilities of state agency representatives. Frankly, I don't think that anyone in the NCSAB needs to have anyone connected with NAC or any other private organization speak for him, but if that kind of effort is going to be made, I would hope that the person making the effort would at least manage to get things straight.

In recent correspondence, both you and Mr. Kossiek have indicated an interest in accurate information and in keeping the record accurate. Since no one shares such an interest more intensely than I do, let's get the record straight.

First, if there are any questions about the nature and scope of Dr. Bleecker's efforts to involve himself in the internal affairs of the NCSAB, I would be happy to provide anyone who still has such questions with a list of people to talk to from among those individuals who routinely represent member agencies before the NCSAB.

Secondly, in your letter to Mr. Sundquist you erroneously give the impression that I presided at some sort of properly scheduled and duly conducted business meetings of the NCSAB in Washington this past February. I did no such thing and so stated to you and others while attending the spring CSAVR meeting. What I did do was moderate a lively and useful session in which a number of individuals who are active within the NCSAB got together to talk about certain issues and to express, on the basis of such information as was at that time available, their views and preferences in relation to those issues.

Thirdly, your letter states that "four of the six NCSAB Board members (a majority of the board) were present as well as about twenty other members." The facts are as follows: (1) I counted twenty members present at the maximum, including myself, Lyman D'Andrea, and Jim Carballo, the only three board members present. (2) One of the twenty members present was "elected" to the board during the "meeting." You also stated that there were no opposing votes. I obviously did not vote nor abstain, since I did not consider the meeting to be valid in the first place.

Fourth, your letter improperly might lead one who has not read the minutes of properly scheduled business meetings to conclude that an overwhelming majority of the full membership has since 1972

consistently endorsed NAC and everything which NAC exemplifies. That is most emphatically not the case. At no time has support for NAC ever been authorized by even a simple majority of the NCSAB members in good standing. For the past several years, at least fifty-two agencies have been eligible for membership in the NCSAB, and it is not correct to give the impression, whether deliberately or inadvertently, that as many as twenty-six agencies have at any time accorded NAC their unqualified endorsement.

Fifth, your letter to Mr. Sundquist states that "Mr. Pogorelc was persuaded to call a meeting in Denver." I am not sure what kind of innuendo you are trying to make through that statement. The fact is that last January I sent out to the full membership a memorandum in which I advised that because of the number of people who wanted to have time on the NCSAB's spring program, the length of the agenda, and the time that would be required to deal with controversial issues such as support of NAC, it seemed clear that we could not transact all pending business without interfering with the spring CSAVR program, giving less than adequate attention to the things state agencies for the blind needed to be dealing with, or both. In that correspondence, I advised that because of these factors and in keeping with sentiments expressed at our annual business meeting in San Francisco for an "open forum" type of format at the next meeting, the spring meeting of the NCSAB would not be held concurrent with the spring CSAVR meeting but would instead be held at a later date and at a place more convenient to the full NCSAB membership. The membership was surveyed incidental to this correspondence, with about three-fifths of the full membership responding affirmatively. A meeting of the

NCSAB Executive Board was then properly scheduled with due notice to all members. Those who were able to attend the executive board meeting then reviewed the responses and the spring meeting was then scheduled in Denver in accordance with the preferences reflected by most people responding to my membership survey and in accommodation of RSA representatives who needed to be in attendance to discuss various state-Federal matters. To the extent, therefore, that any proper directive from the membership exists, I think that the directive is contained in the responses I received from a survey in which every dues-paying member of the NCSAB had a fair opportunity to express its particular preferences. I have heard key representatives of NAC try to make much of your organization's high commitment to democratic principles and, that being the case, it certainly would be interesting to see you reconcile those professed commitments to democratic ideals with the process through which you represent that some sort of "membership directive" was conveyed to me by those who were able to attend the CSAVR's spring meeting.

Last fall, at the NCSAB's annual meeting in San Francisco, it was the consensus of those present that future programs of the NCSAB should be opened to various groups, organizations, and interests, so as to provide an open public forum for useful and constructive dialogue within work for the blind. Further, it was felt that if the good offices of the NCSAB might be used to promote some sort of reconciliation of the differences between NAC and the NFB, then it would be appropriate for the NCSAB to try to serve in such a peace-making role. Because of questions about the extent to which NAC had actually responded to the NCSAB's various recommendations on

standards and because of questions as to NAC's intentions for future responsiveness to the position of state agencies, a motion was overwhelmingly passed to defer further support of NAC but to establish a special Liaison Committee to work directly with NAC representatives on matters of mutual interest and shared responsibility.

It will be recalled that when you and other NAC representatives met with this Liaison Committee in Portland this past December, you personally made a number of representations and gave a number of assurances to the members of the Liaison Committee. Included among these was your expression of a willingness to meet with NFB representatives to explore the possibility of working out those differences the two organizations have been having on accreditation issues. When you were subsequently installed as president of NAC, you again made related statements about your interest in trying to get this highly unfortunate controversy resolved in an honorable manner. In view of your stated position, I regret that you did not choose to accept my invitation to appear on the program of the NCSAB's meeting in Denver to discuss these matters in a public proceeding of which an adequate record would be kept and subsequently made available to anyone having a legitimate interest therein. A joint session involving both the president of NAC and the president of the NFB could, I believe, have been a most constructive and hopefully productive event.

Despite your personal absence from the Denver meeting and notwithstanding NAC's effort to encourage various state agency representatives to react to accreditation issues emotionally and with closed minds, the NCSAB position continues to be one of commitment to the concept of

meaningful accreditation of agencies serving the blind and, during the Denver meeting, the NCSAB reaffirmed its willingness to work with NAC in mutual effort directed toward the improved realization of that concept. It is my personal hope that the NCSAB's stance on accreditation issues can always be properly categorized as constructive, objective, responsible, and relevant to the service delivery responsibilities of state agencies. It also is my personal hope that in working from this basic stance, the NCSAB will never allow discussion to deteriorate to the irresponsible, unprofessional, and insupportable kinds of personality-oriented attempts at character assassination that I have heard attributed to key representatives of NAC over the past several months.

In the interest of providing full and accurate information to all interested individuals, I am forwarding copies of this letter to those individuals indicated below.

As you know, over the years and apart from my service within the NCSAB, I have invested a considerable amount of personal time and effort in the accreditation movement. In addition to reviewing and commenting on various sets of standards, I have served on one of NAC's technical committees and I have been involved with on-site reviews, including an on-site review of the Office for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Arkansas last summer. Having tried to make those kinds contributions in the past and having tried to conduct myself in a constructive manner since assuming my present position within the NCSAB, it would be less than honest of me to try to represent that I do not greatly resent the defamatory personal attacks recently made on me and others who regard it as our duty to advocate forcefully that the NCSAB's

defined position be made a more vital and integral part of any viable accreditation movement in work for the blind. Please be assured of my determination not to allow personal resentment to interfere with open-mindedness and fairness in my approach to anything which has a reasonable potential for bringing about improvements in services for the blind. Accordingly, I now extend you best wishes for success in working out the various problems and deficiencies which inhibit NAC in its capacity to make far-reaching contributions to work for the blind, and consistent with the position assumed at the NCSAB's Denver meeting, I now advise you that while state agencies for the blind most emphatically will not serve as a rubberstamp for other organizations, the NCSAB most certainly will continue to be willing to work with NAC in an appropriate, constructive, and good-faith manner on those matters in which we share mutual interest and for which we share joint responsibility. Similarly, I feel that I can safely speak for the entire NCSAB Executive Board in extending you best wishes for success in improving upon the various problems confronting the State agency for the blind in Arkansas and in assuring you that if there is some proper manner in which the NCSAB might be of assistance with those problems, then our organization's assistance will be promptly extended upon request.

Sincerely,

ROBERT L. POGORELC,
President.

cc: NCSAB Executive Board
NCSAB Liaison Committee to NAC
Mr. W. Harold Bleakley
Mr. Mervin J. Flander
Mr. Perry Sundquist
Mr. Rodney J. Kossick

STATE OF MAINE,
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES,
BUREAU OF REHABILITATION,
Augusta, Maine, May 24, 1976.

Mr. ROBERT L. POGORELC,
*President, National Council of State
Agencies for the Blind, Inc.,
Portland, Oregon.*

DEAR BOB: I have, for several months, been watching with interest and dismay the game of charades which many of us feel is presently being played by the present leadership of NCSAB.

In my eighteen years of work with the blind the fifty-three-page questionnaire concerning accreditation and mobility service standards is the most bureaucratic, unprofessional document I have ever been requested to complete. It is an insult to the intelligence of the membership of NCSAB. It is also obvious from the result of the Denver meeting of May 9-11 that you have lost the complete confidence of the majority of the membership of NCSAB and that further attempts to bypass this membership can only result in further disservice to services for the blind.

I do not have the reputation of being an avid letter-writer but I cannot help but express a feeling of pride for the organized blind people of Maine who, in no uncertain terms, supported the activities of this agency and then publicly stated they considered themselves full partners in their blind service delivery system. It was quite evident by this public support that they did not feel they needed the "revered" advice of outsiders to tell them what to do.

One may ask what the above has to do with "the Denver Meeting" and the

"questionnaire" but I am sure the message is quite clear to the membership of NCSAB.

Very truly yours,

PAUL E. ROURKE,
Director, Division of Eye Care.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE AGENCIES
FOR THE BLIND, INC.,
Portland, Oregon, June 8, 1976.

Mr. PAUL E. ROURKE,
*Director, Division of Eye Care,
Bureau of Rehabilitation,
Department of Human Services,
Augusta, Maine.*

DEAR PAUL: Thank you for your letter of May 24, in which you express your objections to our survey of membership attitudes and preferences on accreditation. A few other NAC-accredited agencies have also corresponded with me to express similar points of view.

I do not believe that you have up to this time been heavily involved in the constant effort made by the NCSAB to respond to NAC requests for input on revisions to standards. Those requests are routine and, of course, most time-consuming and burdensome for those agencies who have been substantially carrying this load in the past. However, because of the major interest which state agencies for the blind should have in meaningful standards for accreditation, it has been my strong feeling that the NCSAB could not responsibly ignore these requests for input. Similarly, it continues to be my strong belief that if the NCSAB is to participate in the process of revising and strengthening standards, then our input

should both be meaningful and representative of the overall views of state agencies.

In order for this to be accomplished, it is advisable for the Liaison Committee to NAC to have some basic and objective point of departure. That is the purpose of the questionnaire to which you refer. Once the responses are in, the plan is to employ some graduate student or rehabilitation educator, to get assurances from that individual regarding confidentiality, and then to have that person tabulate and summarize the information so received. It is anticipated that the results will, following adequate safeguards to protect agencies who prefer not to be identified and thereby exposed to the danger of being enmeshed in a bitter controversy which has been going on in this field for some time, be shared with state agencies, NAC, and anyone else having a legitimate interest in the results. It is felt that this information will be useful to everyone, and that the availability of a data base of this type will facilitate the NCSAB's future input to NAC on particular sets of standards.

No one to date has suggested that the questionnaire is any type of precise scientific research instrument. The effort currently being made is not represented as being that type of research project. Basically, this is simply an attempt to identify ways in which accreditation might be improved upon so as to be made more responsive to various problems and concerns confronting state agencies for the blind in this current era.

In developing the questionnaire, effort was made to provide maximum flexibility for responses. It also seemed appropriate to try to incorporate into the various items every point of view I have heard expressed within the NCSAB over the years on this

issue of accreditation. We need to remember, I feel, that there is after all more than one point of view existing within the NCSAB on the NAC issue. If, however, you will review the instructions and questions carefully, you will find that respondents are afforded every possible latitude to return to this office a completed questionnaire that fully and accurately sets out their basic attitude and preferences on accreditation.

Very candidly, I regret that it is necessary for the NCSAB to conduct a survey of this type. Obviously, something of this type is only one more additional duty and more or less of a sideline type of activity for those carrying the ball. Ideally, a survey of this type should be made by an organization such as RSA or by NAC itself. However, no other organization has to this date made any in-depth effort to try to determine where state agencies for the blind generally stand on accreditation or what the needs and preferences of state agencies actually are. Therefore, in order for something to go forward as being fully representative of where *all* state agencies stand, it is necessary that *every* state agency—not just a carefully selected sample—be afforded the opportunity to offer its input in a comprehensive manner. Regardless of where your division might stand and regardless of your reservations about the adequacy of a survey form designed by volunteers working on their own time, I would hope that you would see fit to give this office a more specific idea of the basis on which your division assumed whatever stance it may have on accreditation.

Criticism about this or any other NCSAB initiatives is something I can and do readily accept. We will never eliminate the reasons for either valid or fabricated criticism by engaging in a lot of letter-writing. The

NCSAB is only as strong and as adequate as members who are willing to roll up their sleeves and jump in make it. There is a lot of legitimate work to be performed and it would be my hope that eventually every state agency for the blind in the country will start shouldering its fair share of the load. Until all representatives of state agencies for the blind start facing up to and solemnly maintaining the objectivity and independence associated with their capacities as state officials, I am afraid that we will be seeing many farces and charades. That sort of thing will not, however, be originated by your current executive board. It is not our duty to determine which faction within the NCSAB might or might not be the larger minority and then to endeavor to be responsive to that particular faction. Instead, it is our duty to try to be responsive to and representative of *all* agencies included among the NCSAB membership. The only way to accomplish this is to afford everyone a fair and equal opportunity for participation in the organization's activities, and the only way to assure the provision of that opportunity to all is to operate in careful conformity with the NCSAB's bylaws and with the provisions of those statutes under which the NCSAB was chartered. That's the way it has been up to now, and that's the way it has to be.

I am pleased to hear about the partnership existing in your State between the

organized blind and their service delivery network. It is my personal hope that such a working relationship might someday represent a reality in every state. If, however, this is to be defined as an objective worth pursuing, then I suggest that it is up to the full NCSAB membership to do the defining. In this connection, I am confident that the membership of the NCSAB is fully competent to define and aggressively pursue objectives without a lot of outside assistance and I am also confident that those of us who exhibit the independence and responsibility to do this should fully anticipate a certain amount of criticism to be stimulated by those outside of the NCSAB who may be rendered nervous when state agencies for the blind start to stand up, assert their independence, and experience increasing success with things squarely related to improvements in services for the blind and visually handicapped.

I hope that you will find the foregoing clarification helpful, and I cordially invite your division's constructive and ongoing involvement in the work of the NCSAB.

Yours truly,

ROBERT L. POGORELC,
President.

□

STATE ORDERED TO PAY BLIND "SELF-EMPLOYED"

BY

WILLIAM A. JOHNSON

[Reprinted by courtesy of the *Hartford (Conn.) Times.*]

The State Board of Education and Services to the Blind may have to pay as much as \$19,000 dollars to about one hundred forty blind residents, according to a preliminary finding by the U.S. Department of Labor.

The Federal Department last week ruled that the State Board must comply with a 1974 law that requires that all State employees be paid the minimum wage, unless otherwise certified by the Labor Department's certification panel.

The ruling affects about 138 blind persons in the State who are unable to work in the regular labor market and are involved in the State Board's therapeutic work program.

William E. Patton, Board Director, said Monday that since 1921 the Board has offered the therapeutic program whereby certain blind persons can "participate in a useful activity and at the same time accumulate some earnings." The program includes such activities as making craft items such as afghans and potholders.

He said the program's participants—many old with additional handicaps—were considered by the Board to be "self-employed." He said most worked out of their homes—at their own leisure and speed.

But last week the Federal Department ruled that these blind workers are not self-employed but are State workers eligible for minimum wage, unless otherwise certified.

According to John J. Reardon, Area Director of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment Standards Administration, it is likely that the State Board will have to pay all persons involved in the therapeutic program the minimum wage retroactive to May 1974.

He said it is quite probable that the Board could have obtained certification to pay certain workers less than the minimum wage if it had sought it.

Patton said Monday the Board never sought certification because "we considered them only as self-employed persons."

Patton said it has been the Board's policy to establish a maximum pay figure—\$2.40 per hour—and divide the number of piecework items into the figure to determine the persons's wages.

For example, if an average between a fast, medium, and slow worker in the program showed that three items could be made each hour, then the person making three items would get \$2.40, with a person making only one getting eighty cents.

Patton, who was quick to point out that the majority of the State's blind residents are eligible for the regular employment market, said the program is not designed to develop productivity requirements but only to serve as a therapeutic service.

Patton said the Board has begun immediate steps to come into full compliance with the Federal order. He said the projected figure of \$19,000 owed the program's

participants was only a preliminary one, based on data supplied the Federal certification office by the program's participants. □

SOMEONE SPECIAL: GENEVIEVE ADKINSON

[Reprinted, with permission, from the *Bellingham* (Wash.) *Herald*.]

Not only is Genevieve Adkinson president of the National Federation of the Blind of Whatcom County, but of the twenty-three members here she is the only one who cannot see at all.

The Federation works through its local, state, and national organizations to help blind persons with their special problems and to get them better education opportunities. "If they get this [education]" Mrs. Adkinson said, "they can go out and earn a living like a sighted person."

Meeting at 1:00 p.m. the second Friday of each month at First Baptist Church, Federation members hear tapes of communications from State and national offices and plan money-raising events and local projects. Last month, it sponsored the showing of a film at the high-rise apartments and service clubs about teaching the blind everything from lighting a match to water-skiing.

As president, Mrs. Adkinson keeps organizational details literally at her fingertips. She has a Braille card file on each member, and other information a club official needs. She has her own Braille-writer which she uses for the card file, in correspondence, and in her housekeeping.

Although Mrs. Adkinson lives alone in her little house on James Street, she has someone accompany her when she goes

shopping. When she gets home, the friend sorts the groceries and Mrs. Adkinson identifies them with Braille notes before putting them in her cupboards.

She has glued clothing snap-fasteners to the controls of her electric range so she can feel the position of the dials. She can turn the oven dial to 300 degrees, give it an "unth" more, and be within a degree or two of 325. Her washing machine has tape on the dial to indicate the various cycles. Everything in the house is kept clean and neat and in its place.

Being blind doesn't necessarily shut one off from the world. Through the Seattle Library for the Blind, Mrs. Adkinson receives magazines on plastic records which she plays on an 8½-rpm phonograph furnished by the Federal Government. *Newsweek* comes on three records; *Reader's Digest*, on five. The packages have a number of addresses, one on top of the other. When Mrs. Adkinson is finished, she tears off the top one, which is hers, and puts the package out with the next person's address on top. The Library also provides "talking books" for the blind. The service is available through Bellingham Public Library to anyone who is legally blind.

For exercise, Mrs. Adkinson works in her garden—she only has flowers she can identify

by feel—and goes to Leisure Time Club dances. Although she has never seen them, she has learned pattern dances. She especially enjoys taking part in the annual fishing derby the Lions clubs and Everett Yacht Club hold for the blind.

She started to lose her sight before she was twenty, but her son was nearly grown before she became totally blind twenty-five years ago. Her first husband, Alfred Bliss, bought her a typewriter and she learned touch-typing from a record and taught herself Braille.

He died in 1959 and she was alone on a farm outside of Canton, New York. Seeking a city, she decided to move to Bellingham in 1962. Her parents had lived here and she had made friends while visiting. She and Oliver Adkinson were married here in 1967, but she was widowed again three years later.

Mrs. Adkinson believes the blind can do almost anything a sighted person can, if they get the training. And she doesn't have much sympathy for the blind who don't take advantage of opportunities to learn and to live fully. She always has. □

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SERVICES FOR THE BLIND

BY

F. E. CROXTON

Editor's Note.—F. E. Croxton, Director, Department of Reader Services, made the following remarks at the May 1976 meeting of the National Conference of Librarians for the Blind.

It is a distinct pleasure to be with you this evening to help kick off the 1976 National Conference of Librarians for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. All of us in the Library of Congress are proud of our part in this magnificent national program and we are anxious to give every encouragement to its development and growth.

For me, this is a very special evening because it is my first opportunity to meet and speak with you who are on the firing line providing service. Furthermore, it is special because it is my first direct public association with the program since the recent organizational realignment of the Library of Congress which created the

Department of Reader Services, of which the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is a major part. I only regret that I will not be able to be with you throughout the week to learn more about your services; however, I know that Mr. Cylke and his able staff will brief me thoroughly as soon as the conference is over.

Although I eagerly accepted Mr. Cylke's offer to let me make a few remarks this evening, I immediately asked him to begin to familiarize me with the program on an accelerated schedule and to give me a few facts on the program that I would not be likely to obtain otherwise. He and his staff did an excellent job, as they always do, and we soon had some interesting and constructive exchanges of views on a number of subjects which might otherwise have been delayed.

For example, I learned that this forty-five-year-old program has increased in

terms of dollars 160-fold; in terms of circulation of materials, over 300-fold; in terms of users, more than 7-fold for Braille, but nearly 170-fold for all users combined. From no machines in the field in 1935 when the talking book program began, the program has grown to the point where more than 400,000 machines are now issued and in use. The growth has been and probably will continue to be tremendous. From that original small network of nineteen regional librarians serving 3,200 adult blind from a total collection of less than 25,000 items in 1932, the program has blossomed to one operating through about 150 libraries serving a half million readers from an inventory of several million items in various formats.

It is clear that this kind of progress requires not only money but many dedicated workers. I was astounded as Mr. Cylke and his staff discussed not only the business aspects of managing our \$15-million program and providing you with the wherewithal to serve your readers but also the impact of volunteer activities on the ability to serve. As a manager I readily understood how this program rests on your contributions as librarians; I now understand that it is undergirded by the efforts of hundreds of volunteers repairing machines, brailleing special items, reading on request, and performing hundreds of other essential tasks. I was shaken by the dependency of our program on the Postal Service and the value of the Federal subsidy which provides free mailing service for the blind—without it the program costs would double!

This isn't all Mr. Cylke and his staff taught me. I began to learn about selection, about inventory, about publications, about network services, about an automated union catalog, and about the music program. I expect to learn a lot more.

With these things in mind, and tonight—as well as the program as a whole—in view, I began to think about what I could contribute, and about what I might say this evening. I began to ask some questions of the “do we,” “can we,” and “why can't we” variety. I was leading up to something, and Mr. Cylke knew it. He knew I was going to reaffirm the commitment of the Library of Congress to the Blind and Physically Handicapped reader but he didn't know how. And neither did I at first. Then we both knew, and at just about the same time.

I am pleased to reaffirm this commitment by announcing this evening that the Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped has identified added services both for you and for your readers which will have the effect of making available to blind and physically handicapped readers more of the products and services of the national library. Some will be items for your collections, others will be tools of assistance—some bibliographic, some not. Furthermore, we have identified two targets for research and development which, if successful, should increase the breadth and speed of service to readers at little or no increase in cost.

First the added services.

The emphasis of these services will be to bring to your readers products and services of the Library of Congress made available through other programs of the Library. Products and services which we believe have general if not mass appeal. In this way, we hope to bring something of the Library of Congress itself to you and to your readers. Feedback from you and from your readers will dictate how far we go. To begin this effort and solicit your participation, we have prepared a packet of sample materials that demonstrates some of the items

and services that we now announce to you and soon will announce to the readership.

Included in the packet is a print copy of the *Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*. This publication is designed to inform the general reader of special collections and acquisitions of the Library of Congress and contains articles on related topics and selected excerpts from books in the collection. DBPH will produce selected articles or full issues in press Braille and cassette format for circulation to readers by network libraries. The first such issue deals with children's literature. Copies of these are being shipped to your libraries. The October 1975 issue, entitled "The Life and Age of Women," is scheduled for production later this year. Other current or retrospective issues will be produced each year and all will be announced to readers via *Talking Book Topics* and *Braille Book Review*. I encourage you to subscribe to print copies of the *Journal* and to use volunteers to reproduce items of local interest when they are not included in the national program.

A second print item in the packet is a pamphlet, "Library of Congress Publications." Items listed cover a wide variety of subjects. The most appropriate items will be produced in Braille or recorded form for use by your readers. Note that some materials are already available for purchase in recorded form should you wish to supplement your collections; your suggestions for items to be produced and distributed nationally should be forwarded to the Division.

Also included in the packet are a subject list and sample of a series called Library of Congress Science Tracer Bullets. These are brief literature guides on topics of timely interest, published at irregular intervals in print and distributed free of charge by the

Science and Technology Division. The information in these compilations is meant to be used as a starting point for scholarly or recreational research in the particular subject. Each bullet includes a statement of its scope; sources of introductory information on the topic covered; subject headings used in card catalogs that can lead to additional materials; basic texts and references to the topics; useful bibliographies; and sources of state-of-the-art reviews and conference proceedings. Print copies of most of the items listed should be available at large public or university libraries. Readers doing research would be responsible for obtaining the print copies and having them transcribed into an appropriate format through their own resources or by a volunteer group such as Recording for the Blind. Keep us informed of such transcriptions and we will keep a central record so duplication of effort need not occur. The Science and Technology Division will provide copies of unpublished speeches, reports, or other referenced material from its vertical file.

The final item in your packet is a Network Bulletin announcing a new column which will appear in *Talking Book Topics* and *Braille Book Review* beginning with the July-August issues. The column is planned to help bring the Library of Congress closer to blind and physically handicapped scholars by providing information about its vast resources, its publications, and selected activities of general interest. The Network Bulletin includes a copy for the first column describing the *Quarterly Journal* and announcing the availability of the issue on children's literature. Other topics to be covered in the near future are the LC Science Tracer Bullets, literary recordings of the Library of Congress (an annotated price list), and selected LC publications of general interest.

Next the two new targets for research.

With the growth of network, collection, and readership, inventory and speed of service becomes an increasing problem. It appears that automation and communication are technologies not yet being brought effectively to bear in our program; consequently, investigation of the following two opportunities will proceed as soon as funds and imaginative proposals are available:

(1) Remote on-demand production of Braille copy from centrally maintained masters using commercial communication lines.

(2) Remote on-demand production of recorded matter on standard cassette from centrally maintained masters using commercial communication lines.

These research tasks will not provide answers to the storage and inventory difficulties we experience today, but if successful, they will alleviate them in the future, increase the variety of material promptly available to readers, and decrease the average cost of making a title available in the system.

Of course these are not the only targets of opportunity to be undertaken. One example of ongoing research and development by which innovations in communication are expected to aid in direct delivery to the patron is the Telebook Project which will be described later on this week. If it is as successful as we hope, the Telebook effort will make prompt low-cost electronic delivery of recorded materials directly to the homes of individual readers following specific requests a reality where closed-circuit TV services are available.

Conferences such as the one beginning today refresh as well as exhaust. Attendees and speakers alike will learn a great deal about this important program of service in the next few days no matter how deeply and how long each has been involved in it. The free and frank exchange of views is always constructive. As I said at the outset, I accepted Mr. Cylke's invitation to be here tonight with great pleasure; I feel honored that you have listened so patiently to what may have been over-long remarks; and I hope that the new services the Division has permitted me to announce tonight will be of real value to your readership and to you. Thank you. □

BLIND JUROR BILL ADOPTED IN WASHINGTON

BY

ED FOSCUE

Editor's Note.—Mr. Foscue is Legislative Chairman of the NFB of Washington.

In the regular legislative session of 1975 the Washington State Legislature passed a bill which, for the first time in history, guarantees that a Clerk of Court can *not* deny a person his right and responsibility to serve on jury panels solely because of blindness to any degree. This bill is one of the best, if not *the* best law of its type in the Nation.

Late in 1971 a blind man in the City of Seattle received a notice to appear for jury duty. When he appeared, white cane in hand, the Clerk of Court told him that he could not serve on a jury because he was "not in possession of all of his faculties" (he was blind). He appealed to the Judge, who upheld the Clerk's opinion that since the law said a juror "must be in possession of all of his faculties" the blind could not serve on juries. This blind man then came to the NFB of Washington. The NFB of Washington considered the situation carefully and thought that this was an improper, discriminatory act based upon an individual's opinion of the meaning of "possession of all of his faculties"; in other words, was the word "faculties" intended to mean mental or physical faculties. We brought the case to the Federal Court in 1972 hoping we could get a decision that could be used nationally. The Judge decided, however, that we would have to change the law in our State to clarify the situation.

In 1973 we first introduced our "Blind Juror" bill at the same time that we introduced our Commission for the Blind bill.

We worked so hard trying to pass our Commission bill that we neglected our Blind Juror bill and therefore lost it in committee. In 1975 the situation was somewhat different. We introduced another Commission bill, but knowing the position Governor Evans had taken—that he would veto any Commission for the Blind bill—we felt that it was futile to spend a great deal of time on it and therefore we were able to spend a major portion of time on the Blind Juror bill. First we got letters of support from key people and organizations throughout the State. These included Governor Dan Evans, Superior Court Judge Jerome Johnson (including with his letter statements of how other judges felt about our bill), the Seattle-King County Bar Association, the Human Rights Commission, and the Washington State Trial Lawyers Association. With these letters in hand we contacted all of the members of the House Judiciary Committee, requesting their support and asking two who were attorneys to testify for us. And then, at five p.m. on the night before an eight a.m. hearing, disaster struck. A clerk of the Judiciary Committee found a conflict between our bill and the existing law of which we had been unaware. We talked quickly with one of the Attorney Generals and were told how to correct the conflict with other amendments. That night we wrote the amendments and gave them to Representatives Douthwaite and Leckenby, our two chief sponsors for the bill, to introduce for us. It seems that the four members of the Federation who testified did an outstanding job because we came off with a unanimous vote for the bill

as amended. After a great deal of contact with Representatives on the Rules Committee, we also passed Rules with a unanimous vote, and then, with further contact with the rest of the Representatives, we got a unanimous vote for our bill on the floor of the House.

Now for the tough ones. Three big battles loomed ahead: the Senate Judiciary Committee, the Senate Rules Committee, and the Senate floor. Senator Pete Francis, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, had openly stated that he would give us a hearing but would oppose the bill. This, plus the fact that on his Judiciary Committee there were four of the "big guns" in the Senate—all lawyers, all on the Rules Committee, none recognizing the competence of the blind, and all opposing our bill. We had to pressure Senator Francis to give us our hearing, but when he did we were very fortunate because the "big guns" apparently decided that they did not want to be known as opponents of the blind, so they did not show up for the hearing. Again our blind Legislative Committee, with the assistance of Nat Jackson from the Governor's Office and Mike Ryherd from the Washington Trial Lawyers Association, carried the battle and convinced even Senator Francis that this was a good bill, and we again received a unanimous vote. Unfortunately, with the absence of the four members and several others that day, we did not have a quorum, so we had to complete the vote by getting several Senators who were not there to sign on the bill. Our "big gun" Senators had really missed the boat because they gave us an extra argument by not bothering to come to the hearing even though one was seen to enter the hearing room, see us, and turn around and walk out. This gave us the opportunity to explain to the other Senators that these four, although opposing the

bill, did not even bother to listen to what the blind had to say.

One of these four then told me, "You will never get your bill past our Rules Committee." So we went to work. We talked to every Senator on the Rules Committee until we were sure we had the vote for our bill and then asked a Senator to "pull" the bill. And so it was voted out of Rules, not by a unanimous vote, but it was voted out.

Now loomed the big and final battle—the battle on the floor of the Senate. We knew that two of the Senators opposing the bill had worked together to develop an amendment to our bill. We were sure this amendment would be designed to change the intent of our bill. But try as we would, we couldn't find out what the amendment would say. Our friends in the House and Senate asked for copies of the amendment but were told that it wasn't ready. This went on until the day of the Senate hearing, when the amendment was introduced on the floor so that we would not be able to explain to the rest of the Senators the damage this amendment would do. Unfortunately the amended bill passed with only Senator Francis voting against the bill because he realized how bad the amendment was to our goals. We were desolate and decided that if the bill passed the House with that amendment, we would have to request that the Governor veto the bill as it would have negated all of our goals. But since this was on a Friday it gave us two extra days to work on it.

We wrote a position statement to give to every member of the House and Senate, showing how damaging the amendment was and we again requested all legislators to vote for the original bill without the amendment. When the bill was returned to the

floor of the House, we received a substantial vote against the amendment and the House requested the Senate to recede from the amendment. Back to the Senate again to talk to as many Senators as we could, to explain why this bill should be passed without the amendment. The bill returned to the floor and we sat building ulcers until, after some brilliant debate by Senator Francis, the vote came and we won by a substantial margin.

So how did we pass the Blind Juror bill? Yes, my wife and I spent a lot of time in Olympia, but others appeared to testify or talk to legislators whenever they were asked to do so. But most important of all was the use of the "legislative hot line" (a toll-free line from anyplace in the State to our Legislature).

Why the organized blind? Without the excellent testimony of our members and without the many calls and letters from our members and friends, the bill would never have passed. We now have made a strong core of friends in the Legislature and our State government now knows who the organized blind are. All of this will help make the passage of our Commission bill a reality during the 1977 legislative session.

An interesting climax to the NFB of Washington's passage of the Blind Juror bill. In June, before the Governor's signature had time to dry, Maria Bradford, then our State secretary, was called to serve. She did so proudly and well, according to an excellent article in the *Yakima Herald Republic*. □

MR. APODACA, NIB, AND THE NFB: OR WHY THE NFB

In August of 1975, Ernie Apodaca, who is blind and who owns and operates his own business, was notified that the General Services Administration (GSA) would no longer contract with his firm. Such contracts, in the future, said GSA, would be handled by the Committee for Purchase from the Blind and Other Severely Handicapped. Mr. Apodaca built his business on his Government contracts and had in his employ a number of minority workers. To put Mr. Apodaca and his employees out of business in order to give employment (mostly in sheltered shops) to other handicapped persons would really be "robbing Peter to pay Paul." Mr. Apodaca appealed to Harry Steinmetz, president of the Cerritos Valley Chapter, NFB of California. Mr. Steinmetz communicated the facts, after consultation on the State level, directly to Mr. Gashel in our Washington Office. Mr. Gashel and Senator Harrison Williams, chairman of the

Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, went to work. The attached correspondence indicates once again *why* the National Federation of the Blind. It also describes some of what goes on in the Washington Office. It certainly represents another answer to the question of why people should join our movement.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
Washington, D.C., August 25, 1975.

Mr. CHARLES FLETCHER,
*Executive Director,
Committee for Purchase from the Blind
and Other Severely Handicapped,
Arlington, Virginia.*

DEAR MR. FLETCHER: Ernie Apodaca is an enterprising entrepreneur who happens

to be blind. His firm, United Converters and Printers, Inc. (located at 11200 Greenstone, Santa Fe Springs, California), contracts with the General Services Administration (GSA) to produce various types of pressure-sensitive labels used by the Federal Government. His GSA contracts constitute the bulk of the business and thus the bulk of his income and that of the firm, United Converters and Printers, Inc.

It is my understanding that National Industries for the Blind and the Committee for Purchase from the Blind and Other Severely Handicapped are interested in adding the labels produced by Mr. Apodaca's firm to the list of blind-made products. It is alleged that one NIB workshop is acquiring the capability to produce the labels now under contract through GSA. I believe that you are personally aware of the possible financial injury which Mr. Apodaca would suffer if the Committee should decide that one hundred percent of these labels shall henceforth be produced by the workshops.

The purpose of this letter is to request that special consideration be given in this instance. Specifically, we ask that the Committee limit its proposed quantities of production of the pressure-sensitive labels so that GSA and the Small Business Administration may continue to contract with United Converters and Printers, Inc. for such labels in at least the same quantities of volume now being contracted until such time as SBA determines that such assistance to this firm under Section 8(a) is no longer needed.

The reasoning for this request is obvious on the face of it. As indicated, Mr. Apodaca is blind. As with many of us who are similarly situated, Ernie has exerted himself to get ahead in the world of business, and he

has been reasonably successful at doing it. Because of his initiatives, Ernie is able to support himself and his family. He could have been receiving public assistance. Now, it would be ironic, indeed, if Ernie were to suffer any financial loss which might be brought on by a Federal program designed to assist in the rehabilitation of others. A major purpose of the entire sheltered shop program is, in fact, to assist the blind in their rehabilitation. We feel that this purpose can only be served by a policy which encourages, rather than discourages, individuals to enter and compete in the business world alongside others.

Often we are told by those who administer the workshops that a chief value of the shops is the practical experience one can gain on the job while working in the shop. This experience is said to be of invaluable importance for job placement in private industry. Many of the shops are proud to boast of their placement records. Consistent with this approach is our request that the Committee consider the effect of its proposed action on a blind man who is making it on his own in business.

We know that there are those who argue that prime consideration must be given to the NIB shops. While allowing that it is unfortunate that a blind man may lose his Government contracts they contended that we must consider the larger good—the overall support for shops throughout the country. Such arguments suggest that the workshops function in a vacuum. Such arguments are also inconsistent with the objectives of enhancing, wherever feasible, the employment of the blind in private industry.

If the Committee should fail to protect Mr. Apodaca's hard-won gains, the blind of this country will inevitably draw their own

conclusions. Frankly, it would be hard for us to understand a Committee action which would in any way adversely affect any successful blind entrepreneur. In fact, we are confident that the Committee will not take such action since we are certain that you and the members of the Committee share our views.

We did, of course, want you to know of our deep interest in this situation. We also wanted you to know of our concern for the broader implications involved. We do want to thank you for your kind attention to this most urgent matter.

Cordially yours,

JAMES GASHEL,
Chief, Washington Office.

COMMITTEE FOR PURCHASE
FROM THE BLIND AND OTHER
SEVERELY HANDICAPPED,
Arlington, Virginia, August 28, 1975.

Mr. JAMES GASHEL,
*Chief, Washington Office,
National Federation of the Blind,
Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. GASHEL: This is in reply to your letter of August 25, 1975, copies of which were provided each Committee member, concerning the fact that a blind workshop is interested in adding certain pressure-sensitive labels to the Committee's Procurement List.

We have replied to an earlier letter on this subject from Mr. John Montano, president and senior partner of United Converters and Printers. We understand that Mr.

Apodaca is one of three partners who own this firm.

At this point a blind workshop is exploring the possibility of producing these items. The Committee has received no request to consider them for addition to the Procurement List. If at some future date, the workshop decides to request such addition a notice to that effect will be published in the *Federal Register*, and interested persons will be invited to submit comments.

Under Public Law 92-28 the Committee has the responsibility for determining those products and services which are suitable for provision to the Government by qualified nonprofit workshops serving the blind and other severely handicapped. In making this determination, the Committee considers not only the capability of the workshop to produce the commodity or provide the service, but also the impact on the current or recent contractors to the Government.

Prior to arriving at any decision to add these items to the Procurement List, the Committee will give your comments careful consideration.

Sincerely,

C. W. FLETCHER,
Executive Director.

UNITED STATES SENATE,
Washington, D.C., September 30, 1975.

Mr. C. W. FLETCHER,
*Executive Director,
Committee for Purchase from the Blind
and Other Severely Handicapped,
Arlington, Virginia.*

DEAR MR. FLETCHER: Thank you for your response to my inquiry concerning

the possible addition of pressure-sensitive labels to the Procurement List and the interests of Mr. Apodaca. I would appreciate it if you would notify my office and Mr. Gashel in the event that such labels are proposed to be added to the Procurement List.

In addition, I would appreciate your forwarding me further information regarding the review process for determination of suitable products and services, such as the standards used for determination of capability of a workshop to produce a commodity and standards for determination of impact on current contractors, and the process utilized for comment and input by interested parties.

Sincerely,

HARRISON A. WILLIAMS, Jr.,
*Chairman, Committee on Labor
and Public Welfare.*

COMMITTEE FOR PURCHASE
FROM THE BLIND AND OTHER
SEVERELY HANDICAPPED,
Arlington, Virginia, March 18, 1976.

Mr. JAMES GASHEL,
*Chief, Washington Office,
National Federation of the Blind,
Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. GASHEL: On August 25, 1975, you wrote us concerning the fact that a blind workshop was considering producing nine pressure-sensitive labels currently being provided the Government by United Converters and Printers, Inc. Our reply to you was dated August 28, 1975.

The workshop which had indicated an interest in producing these labels has determined that the estimated Government requirements do not warrant the expenditures required for the equipment to produce them. Thus, these items are being dropped from consideration for addition to the Procurement List.

Please contact us if we may be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

C. W. FLETCHER,
Executive Director.

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND,
Washington, D.C., April 6, 1976.

Mr. HARRY STEINMETZ,
Norwalk, California.

DEAR HARRY: This is in further reference to the matter concerning United Converters and Printers, Inc., which you brought to my attention in your letter dated August 5, 1975.

As you know, on August 25, 1975, I wrote to Mr. Fletcher, Executive Director of the Committee for Purchase from the Blind and Other Severely Handicapped protesting the proposed addition of the present pressure-sensitive labels to the list of blind-made products. I am now pleased to inform you that these labels will apparently not be added to the list, and thus, Ernie Apodaca's business will not be adversely affected, at least in this area. I am enclosing a copy of Mr. Fletcher's March 18 letter to me announcing this decision.

I thought you would want to know of this happy development. This, indeed, is another victory for the blind, and it demonstrates once again why we should be organized.

Cordially yours,

JAMES GASHEL,
Chief, Washington Office.

□

KANSAS CITY BLIND URGE AGENCY TO DE-NAC

BY

JANA SIMS

Unlike the enigmatic sphinx of Greek mythology which posed riddles without answers, the Kansas City Association for the Blind chose to remain silent and unknowing like the sphinx of Egypt. This agency, supposedly serving the blind, refused to answer the organized blind of its community about whether it would or would not renew its NAC accreditation.

The Kansas City Association for the Blind is a private organization and the only NAC-accredited agency in the State of Missouri. The Association runs a sheltered shop, a home for blind women, and a Braille library. It has been NAC-accredited since 1971 and its accreditation came up for renewal in 1976. The Association's structure is typical of many such local agencies. It has a director, Elva Hayes, and a board made up of local community and business people who want to "do good" for the blind. This board consists of twenty-two members. While a few may be parents of blind persons, presently we know of only one legally blind person on the board.

The mystery of whether or not the Association would renew its NAC accreditation began on a hot July afternoon when the local NFB chapter president received calls from a couple of members who wanted to explain that they hadn't been coming to meetings lately because the group met in

the Association's building, and the Association held NAC accreditation. Wasn't it hypocritical of the NFB, these members asked, to fight NAC nationally and ignore it at home? Although the president and most of the chapter hadn't really given the matter any thought before, this point was indeed valid and it was felt something ought to be done. Was moving out the answer?

In checking around we found that not only was the Association NAC-accredited, but its accreditation would have to be renewed in 1976 (this was in 1975). We felt this presented an opportunity to make it clear to the Association that we don't approve of NAC in our own back yard any more that we do in Chicago, Cleveland, or Little Rock. Not only this, but we hoped to persuade the Association to join the growing number of agencies who have seen the light and withdrawn support from NAC.

First the NFB chapter's board requested a meeting between Miss Hayes and NFB Treasurer Richard Edlund and former NFB Second Vice President Jim Coutts to discuss the Association's NAC accreditation. This meeting took place in the middle of August 1975. Besides our representatives and Miss Hayes, her assistant, Ralph Wilkerson, and an Association board member, Mr. Roach, also attended. We stated our views and requested a meeting with the Association's

full board during either September or October. We also requested this through Jim Coutts who spoke with the president of the Association's board, Mr. Jennings, in August. We then began what proved to be the first in a long series of waits.

As the end of September neared and we still had heard nothing from the Association's board, we decided perhaps they were not fully informed about the NFB even though we had been using their meeting room for years. We wrote letters to each board member inviting them to our September meeting at which we intended to show the film "The Blind: An Emerging Minority." By the time they received the letters there would only be a week's notice, but we felt that at least one or two members out of a large board could come to represent the Association, especially if they had been informed of our desire to meet with them concerning NAC. This did not prove to be the case. On the day of our meeting the board president, Mr. Jennings, and one other board member did call to say they could not attend, but that was all. Not one board member showed up. Later we heard complaints from the Association that there had been no place to RSVP in the letter. Given that the time and date and place of the NFB meeting were clearly specified and that our meetings took place in the same room used by the Association board, it hardly seemed necessary to have a number to call for RSVP.

The NFB chapter members, being properly indignant that the Association's board found the organized blind of so little consequence that they could ignore us entirely, voted by an overwhelming majority to send a firm letter to the Association's board repeating our desire for a meeting and stating that if we did not have it by October 31,

1975, we would take action to bring our grievances before the public. Three days after this letter went out, Mr. Jennings sent a letter to Jana Sims, chapter president, informing her that a meeting would be arranged, and by October 9 the meeting took place. It is interesting to note that up to this time the shop run by the Association had for several months worked only a two-day week. This had been mentioned to Mr. Jennings when he called to say he couldn't make our chapter meeting. Soon after our letter reached the board, a four-day week was reinstated. It was said that the work slowdown caused by over-supply of Federal contracts had ended with new orders. Could this be coincidence? Perhaps.

We felt after the meeting with the Association's board that things looked rather bleak in regards to getting them to withdraw from NAC accreditation. Dick Edlund, Jana Sims, Karl Wyat, and three NFB members working in the shop met with twelve to fifteen members of the Association's board, Miss Hayes, and Mr. Wilkerson. We explained our views on NAC and passed out several NAC-packs, but when time came for answers to questions, silence prevailed. One member of the board did express fears that the shop would lose Federal contracts awarded by NIB if it weren't accredited. We tried to reassure him, and Dick Edlund sent copies of a letter from a Federal official which said that NAC had nothing to do with the NIB Federal contracts. Mr. Jennings then asked that the Association be able to attend the Oklahoma meeting of NIB at the end of October before making its decision. We went home to wait again.

All through November and December, whenever the organized blind tried to determine where the Association stood, we met

delay, evasion, or silence. We always had to initiate contact. First we were told the election of a new board in November prevented discussion of the matter. Then a special meeting was being called in December to hear NAC's side of the story. In January the chapter planned a chili supper. The Association offered—in order to save us from all that work—to have the dinner catered for us at the Association's expense. This was indeed the last straw. Our Missouri president, John Dower, and Dick Edlund concurred with many in the chapter who felt we had been patient long enough. Accordingly the chapter president called Miss Hayes and the new president of the Association's board, Mr. Olsen, personnel manager of Western Electric in Lea Summit, Missouri, and informed them that the NFB needed an answer in writing by the time of our meeting in January. We knew that the Association would not treat NAC in the manner in which they had treated the organized blind. We felt entitled to an answer. Miss Hayes said it was not up to her, but only the board. She would see what she could do. Mr. Olsen took a firmer stand. He couldn't understand why two organizations working for the blind such as the NFB and NAC couldn't get along, since they work for the same goals. (Obviously he had not read the material on NAC or he would have known that the NFB does not consider itself in any way the same as NAC, nor are its ends the same.) He went on to say he felt that our demanding an answer in writing by the end of the month was like holding an axe over the Association's head. The NFB would not get and did not deserve an answer no matter what the decision was. He then asked how everyone's Christmas had been. Patiently the chapter president re-explained the NFB's views on NAC. When she told Mr. Olsen that the chapter would likely move its

meetings if no answer was forthcoming, Mr. Olsen returned to: "I can't understand why two organizations working for the same purpose can't get along." (Circular reasoning doesn't lead anyone anywhere, Mr. Olsen.)

It should come as no surprise that the only written answer provided by the Association at our January board meeting consisted of a calendar of the Association's board meetings for the coming year. The NFB remained true to its word. We moved our meeting place. Nor were we surprised when in late March many of us received polite invitations asking us as members of the NFB to attend the NAC on-site team's consumer hearings on April 26, 1976. We had come to know that the Kansas City Association for the Blind was just a nick off the old NAC. Most of us chose to respond to such invitations by refusing and explaining that we knew how NAC in the past has used the presence of NFB members to make it appear that we wholeheartedly support NAC and approve of the agencies which NAC has accredited. Most of us decided to show NAC what the consumers felt about it. We would go, but not to sit on the inside but to picket on the outside, protesting the Kansas City Association's financial and moral support of NAC by its renewal of accreditation, and protesting all of NAC's devious and harmful ways.

In less than a month our demonstration became reality. The demonstration was one of and by the NFB as a whole. Letters requesting support went out to many affiliates. We painted signs, arranged housing for people coming from out of town, et cetera. Our demonstration achieved great success even though the Association obviously will be reaccredited. We gained a great deal of publicity for the issue, having on-the-spot

coverage by two radio stations, three TV stations, the *Kansas City Star*, and a half-hour spot on a radio talk show the evening of the demonstration. Many motorists slowed down to watch us and one teamster refused to cross our lines, although we assured him we weren't there to disrupt work, only to make the public aware of what was being done to hurt the blind. We received many telegrams of support from NFB affiliates, local chapters, and individual members all over the country. A delegation of five came down from Iowa and several from Kansas and from St. Louis. NAC and the Association made a great show of being friendly, but they were obviously nervous. One NAC team member took enough pictures of us to fill a scrapbook.

Although the sphinx of the Kansas City Association kept its silence and procrasti-

nated as long as it could, we did not keep silence nor delay in making known our answer to them and to NAC. We didn't change the fact that they are planning to accredit, but we did let them and the public know that wherever NAC rears its ugly head, the Federation will be there to fight it. The Kansas City Chapter of the NFB did give birth to something in that ten months we waited for an answer from the sphinx. Born in us was the determination to be heard, to stand up for our rights and our beliefs, and born was the knowledge that each of us is truly the Federation in action. We thank all those Federationists who sent us moral support during the demonstration, and urge all Federationists to firmly meet NAC wherever we find it, and to quote a line from Robert Hunt's fine telegram from West Virginia: "In the manner of HST, 'Give 'em hell!'" □

TO MOVE A BUREAUCRACY

BY

CHARLETTE DES JARDINES

[Reprinted, with permission, from the newsletter of the North Carolina Office of Citizen Participation, Raleigh, North Carolina. This is part of an article by the author, "How to Organize an Effective Parent Group and Move Bureaucracies."]

To move a bureaucracy:

(1) You must stop feeling guilty and insignificant.

(2) You must stop apologizing for asking a bureaucrat to do a job you are paying him to do through your taxes.

(3) You must stop begging for what you are entitled to by law.

(4) You must not be patient. No matter how often you are told to "Please be patient,

we are doing everything we can," remember that patience has never moved a bureaucracy. Only impatience has ever made a bureaucracy move.

(5) You must not accept those old excuses: "There isn't any money"; "We need more time"; "We've made a lot of progress"; et cetera. (a) There is never going to be any money unless you demand it. (b) Be miserly with the time you give a bureaucracy to get the job done. It is a natural law of bureaucracies that the more time you give them,

the more time they will take—and often still not get the job done. (c) If there is still a single handicapped child left unserved, the “progress” is not good enough.

(6) You must stop whispering while everyone else is shouting. You can win battles, no matter how small your parent group, if you make enough noise.

(7) You must not be afraid to offend bureaucracies. Do not be afraid to complain to their superiors, your legislators, the mayor, your alderman, the Governor, the newspapers, radio, TV, and other press media. Do not be afraid to expose incompetence, inefficiency, dishonesty, stealing, bribery, or any other wrong-doing; no

matter how powerful the guilty one. Your child's welfare should be your primary motivating force, not the welfare of bureaucrats.

(8) You must get rid of the attitude that “You can't fight City Hall,” “Nothing can be done,” et cetera. You must believe there is a good chance your problem will be resolved if you are persistent enough to see the problem through.

(9) You must use mass action. Remember that politicians are dependent on your vote and those of other parents, that all government officials are dependent on public support. This is why organized groups who make noise are so effective. □

A BLIND COLLEGE WOMAN TO BE DELEGATE FOR FORD

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A staunch supporter of President Ford at the Republican National Convention this August will be a slender, five-foot three-inch woman with flowing black hair and a white cane.

Peggy Pinder, twenty-three years old, of Grinnell, Iowa, is blind.

Miss Pinder, graduated this spring from Cornell College at Mount Vernon, Iowa, and accepted at Yale University for its freshman law class in September, was elected a Ford delegate at the Iowa Republican Presidential convention last Saturday.

Miss Pinder said she decided to become a Republican two years ago “because Republicans understand the place of government in the people's lives better than the Democrats.”

“Republicans,” she explained, “try to find ways to take care of needs through the private sector first while it seemed automatic for Democrats to take care of them through the governmental system.”

Moreover, she added, Republican officials “seem to vote their consciences while Democrats vote their constituencies.”

Miss Pinder set out to win a place on the Iowa delegation early this year, sending a letter to First District Republicans expressing her interest and her situation.

Her father, Al Pinder, editor-publisher of the *Grinnell Herald-Register*, personally handed a copy of the letter to President Ford at the White House last March while attending a newspaper meeting in Washington.

"He asked if I wanted it autographed," Mr. Pinder recalled. "I told him 'no,' that I wanted him to read it." Mr. Pinder said he understood the President sent copies of the letter to some First District Republicans.

Whether that was why Miss Pinder was named a member of the Ford slate presented to First District delegates last Saturday, Mr. Pinder doesn't know.

At any rate, the Ford slate swept the First District over Ronald Reagan's slate, helping the President to his 19-to-17 delegate victory over the former California Governor.

Miss Pinder was graduated Phi Beta Kappa and magna cum laude from Cornell. She was the school's outstanding student as a sophomore and edited the student newspaper, *The Cornellian*, as a senior.

She became blind her freshman year in high school at Grinnell. After attending Iowa Braille and Sight-Saving School, she returned to take her last year at Grinnell and was graduated with her class there.

She will study law "because this particular and intensive kind of training prepares one to speak and write and think and argue, carefully, precisely, and logically."

Also, a law degree would give her several options: to practice law, to go into government service, to work for the blind, or go into politics.

She is interested in constitutional and contract law and wants most to use legal training to help the blind, "who are over-protected and underemployed," through the National Federation of the Blind. She would like someday to become a wife and mother.

Miss Pinder comes by politics naturally. Her father has long been active in Republican circles and one of her grandfathers was a leader in the Alf Landon campaign in Iowa in 1936.

"But we aren't a one-party family," she insists. "My brother is a Democrat and a supporter of Fred Harris of Oklahoma."

When Miss Pinder advised her parents and her grandmother, Mrs. L. B. Watt, that she was going to be a delegate to the State Presidential convention, Mrs. Watt wanted to know if Miss Pinder intended to try for the national convention.

"I told her I couldn't afford it," Miss Pinder recalled. "But my grandmother said, 'You go, and I'll pay.' With encouragement like that, how could I lose?" □

DISABILITY INSURANCE HEARINGS

BY

JAMES GASHEL

Editor's Note.—James Gashel offered the following testimony on behalf of the NFB before the Subcommittee on Social Security of the Committee on Ways and Means of the U.S. House of Representatives, on June 11, 1976.

Mr. Chairman, our membership of more than fifty thousand blind Americans commends you for holding this significant series of hearings on the operation of the Disability Insurance Program authorized by title II of the Social Security Act. From our perspective, the Disability Insurance Program is one of the key elements in the entire scheme of services to the blind. According to the Social Security Administration, approximately 100,000 blind persons now receive monthly cash disability insurance benefits.

The issue paper prepared by the subcommittee staff takes note of the various proposals for amending the provisions of title II with respect to the Disability Insurance Program. The National Federation of the Blind favors a number of these proposals and expresses the hope that they will be considered seriously by the subcommittee and the Congress as a whole.

Particularly, we support legislation which would eliminate the five-month waiting period which is now imposed on disability beneficiaries prior to their receipt of cash benefits, but after they have been determined eligible for such benefits. Mr. Chairman, I know that you can appreciate the fact that the first few months of living

with a disability are in many ways the most difficult. Of course, this is true from an emotional standpoint, but it is also true financially, and that is the important point here today.

I suppose the theory behind the waiting period is that most disabled workers are expected to have at least some cash in reserve which can be used to meet their living costs during a short period after employment ceases, and that for those who do not have such financial reserves, there is always the SSI program and other public assistance. The problem with this notion is quite obvious—when income ceases, costs continue, and an insurance program, if it is to be adequate, will recognize this by picking up where income leaves off.

The same holds true for the Medicare waiting period of two years. In the 1972 Amendments to the Social Security Act the Congress did approve legislation which now allows disability beneficiaries to participate in the Medicare program, but an individual must have been eligible for cash benefits for two years before Medicare eligibility can begin. Mr. Chairman, we would like to see this waiting period removed entirely, fully recognizing the fact that medical costs occur at the beginning of a period of disability just as they occur two years after that disability.

In the Ninety-third Congress, Mr. Chairman, you introduced bills to eliminate both of these waiting periods, and we enthusiastically supported you in this legislation. We

hope that it will pass in the Ninety-fourth Congress.

Let me now turn to a bill, Mr. Chairman, which you have introduced in the Ninety-fourth Congress—H.R. 281, a bill which will vastly improve the program of disability insurance for blind persons. The conditions governing eligibility of blind persons to receive disability insurance have been of grave concern to us as we have sought to achieve economic security, equal opportunity, and full participation in society for all of the blind. We have been gratified that you have joined us in making this concern your concern, and we are also pleased that a sizeable number of your colleagues (only one short of a majority on this subcommittee, and a total of seventy-two in the House as a whole) have also joined with you by introducing or sponsoring bills which have the same objective you are seeking in your bill, H.R. 281.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, H.R. 281 is only the latest in a series of bills with the same purpose, introduced by you and sponsored by others in previous Congresses. I could go into its long legislative history, detailing its passage by the other body six times to the present date and so on, but you know that history well.

Thanks to your efforts, and the efforts of members of this subcommittee as well as others, the eligibility conditions for blind person have been improved, but you have also been a leader in recognizing that more improvement is required. Under present law blind persons must meet a work requirement which extends from a minimum of six quarters of covered work to a maximum of twenty-five quarters, depending on age and the onset of blindness. Blind beneficiaries are also subject to the substantial gainful activity test which takes into account a

number of job factors, the main consideration being the amount of pay received.

The adoption of H.R. 281 would make two fundamental changes in these eligibility requirements. The first would be to standardize the work requirement at six quarters, saying in effect that blind persons would have fully insured status under Social Security after having paid into the program for a year and one half. The second change would be to remove the "substantial gainful activity" test, thus recognizing blindness itself as a disability and investing in the efforts of the blind to become productive tax-paying citizens.

Mr. Chairman, we view Social Security as a true insurance, not a welfare system; and it is on this basis (the insurance concept) that we support your proposal. The original purpose, we are told, for the establishment of the Disability Insurance Program was to provide benefits to individuals to partially replace lost income due to disability. Since this replacement of lost income was made available to all participants in Social Security (the rich and the poor alike) the presumption must have been that there are economic consequences which predictably result from disabilities and that society as a whole is best served by purchasing an insurance against these economic consequences.

I suppose you might say that these insurance benefits amount to a kind of subsidy which is paid to individuals who qualify for it not on the basis of their individual economic need, but on the basis that they are members of a particular group entitled to receive the subsidy because they have a certain physical condition. The present disability insurance provisions of title II are drawn in a manner consistent with this

reasoning in that income and resources are not taken into consideration in making a determination of eligibility. The only income which is considered is that which is earned, and the reason for considering it is to provide some kind of a measure as to the extent of an individual's ability to work at a substantial level. Unearned income does not count since it has nothing whatsoever to do with making this determination. Thus, the award of disability insurance benefits is based only on a physical condition; not an economic need.

The principles of insurance and the practice of assigning subsidies to insure the accomplishment of certain social objectives and for meeting certain social needs are long-standing and traditionally accepted in America. Actually the theories involved here are the same ones which often come into play in the writing of tax policy, and I hardly have to tell you gentlemen anything about that since you are the true experts on that score.

Consider, though, some examples, if you will. Take first the subsidy which all Americans with taxable assets provide those with children by supporting a system of education in the public schools. If for instance a rich family has three children and a poor family has none, the poor family is still taxed to help pay the costs of sending the rich family's children to the public schools. This is so because the American people and the Congress have determined that such a system is in the best interests of the United States. It is not that the rich cannot afford to make special payments for the costs of educating their children or that the poor (who may have no children at all) can easily spare the cash. Society is thought to be better off if the children of all (rich and poor alike) have the opportunity to attend

public schools and if all who have taxable assets (regardless of whether they have children) pay to support the schools. In fact, if only poor children could go to the public schools, our society would be segregated into classes, and there would be considerable stigma attached to attending the public schools. Accordingly, a subsidy is given to all people who have children (rich and poor alike) because a social need is thus met. We have become so accustomed to the subsidy that we do not think about it at all, and one rarely hears any serious suggestion that only the poor should be able to attend the public schools with the rich barred from the subsidy.

Likewise farmers (the wealthy and the poor alike) are paid support prices and thus subsidized. Rightly or wrongly, the American people and the Congress have determined that a social need is met by these provisions. In the same manner, tariffs are charged on certain items coming into the country, taxing the American consumer in order to support the given business or industry here at home. It is thought to be in the best interest of the country as a whole to "protect" that particular business or industry by means of a subsidy, regardless of what it may be called—in this case a tariff.

Also, steamship lines, railroads, and airlines have been given subsidies in the form, for example, of mail contracts and other benefits from time to time. The principle, then, is long-standing and firmly established that society shall pay a subsidy if a social benefit results, which brings me back to the matter of disability insurance for the blind.

With respect to disability insurance for the blind, Mr. Chairman, your proposal is grounded in the realization that there are

tremendous adverse economic consequences which result from blindness, and that these circumstances can most directly and most appropriately be ameliorated by providing an insurance which pays in the event of blindness. Since we are talking about a social insurance—that is, a Social Security benefit—the question is what is the social benefit to result, or what is the social need to be met? To answer this question, let me contrast for you the situation which now exists with the situation which will exist when H.R. 281 is adopted.

Under existing law, if an individual becomes blind and ceases to engage in “substantial gainful activity,” he likely will be eligible to draw disability insurance. He has every incentive to remain unemployed and not return to work at all. Why? In the first place, he is probably not an expert in the law. He only knows that he is now drawing an insurance payment each month and that if he tries to go back to work, he may lose it—whether his attempt at self-support is successful or not. The law is complex, and the talk of allowed earnings, trial work periods, definitions of substantial gainful activity, et cetera, is confusing and not generally conducive to an attempt to make new beginnings. Furthermore, if the individual actually goes to work and (after a specified trial work period) is making somewhere in the neighborhood of two hundred dollars per month, he will lose his disability insurance payments and (if he has earned it) his Medicare eligibility as well. This is true even though he may have been drawing considerably more than two hundred dollars per month in disability payments. If dependents are taken into account, the individual and his family may have been drawing disability payments in excess of nine hundred dollars per month tax free. He is penalized for having tried to become

self-supporting by losing his insurance altogether. Even if he goes back to work, he is tempted to conceal earnings, and if he yields to temptation, he lives in fear of being detected.

Besides all of these complexities, it is conceivable under present law and depending on one's interpretation, that the individual may become blind, go back to work, and lose his job, and thereby become ineligible ever to receive disability insurance payments again because (by going back to work) he has demonstrated that his blindness does not prevent him from engaging in substantial gainful activity. If, on the other hand, he is willing to settle down and draw disability insurance without any attempts to go back to work at all, he can securely rest in the knowledge that the payments will continue on a regular basis month after month, year after year.

Moreover, if an individual becomes blind prior to age twenty-two and, for example, his father is disabled, retired, or deceased, he will likely be eligible for disability insurance. If this is not the case, he will not qualify, despite his blindness. In other words, there are many ramifications and qualifications, but the point is clear. Under the present law the incentives are for the individual to remain idle, to sit at home and not to jeopardize the monthly disability insurance check.

But we must also consider something else. Social attitudes about blindness are replete with myths and misconceptions. As a group the blind are not just viewed as unemployed, we are usually considered unemployable. To be sure, the blind pay a heavy price for this erroneous labeling. For example, recently the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has estimated that

seventy percent of the employable blind population is either unemployed or underemployed. Even so, if, before blindness, an individual had an income of say \$15,000 per year (not an uncommon income for a sighted individual), and if, after blindness, that same individual finds employment at \$6,000 per year (not at all an uncommon experience for the blind), he will still not be eligible to continue to draw disability insurance, despite the fact that a substantial loss of income has occurred. In other words, under the present law, we, the blind, are being asked not only to suffer the indignation of being cast aside in competition for jobs and social opportunities, but we are also told that we must pay in terms of cold cash for this second-class status. The social attitudes about blindness which have traditionally prevented us from assuming the more responsible positions and occupying the more lucrative employment stations in the labor force have been fostered by society as a whole, not just the blind members of society, and therefore, it is equitable for us to propose that everybody should share in carrying the financial burden imposed on us by these social attitudes—a burden which we now bear alone.

This is only justice, nothing more. So, part of the social benefit is a moral consideration—that is, to redress the balances to an extent. An equivalent need and an important social benefit to be achieved may also be found, though, in terms of the changing incentive structure. The adoption of H.R. 281 will essentially correct the inequities I have described by eliminating all complexities and confusion and by providing blind persons with every incentive to venture and earn to their fullest capacity. Under this plan the blind beneficiary of disability insurance will know that he will have a monthly insurance benefit coming

and that it will not be jeopardized by attempts at improving his condition. The blind person is better off, and society generally is better off for him to be productive instead of idle, working instead of sitting at home. Again, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has estimated that income annually lost due to blindness is approximately one billion dollars on a national basis. The effect of this legislation, Mr. Chairman, we believe would be substantially to recover this loss, thus allowing blind persons to be contributors in America, not tax burdens.

As a final note, I should also add that the prevailing situation after the adoption of H.R. 281 will be one of confidence and hope rather than despair and discouragement. Mr. Chairman, it is rare to find an applicant for disability insurance who has not encountered much anxiety and grief in attempting to gain entitlement to the benefits earned through work. Sometimes the period of decision extends for more than a year, during which there is much correspondence and telephoning, not to mention contacts with one's Senators or Representative in Congress. This should not be, and adoption of your proposal embodied in H.R. 281 will substantially eliminate all of the complexities, mix-ups, and disqualifications which create the delays and resulting dissatisfactions.

These are compelling arguments, Mr. Chairman. They are arguments which are consistent with the original objectives of the Disability Insurance Program, and they are responsive to the needs which have been identified as the program has operated over a considerable period of time. Despite these arguments, though, and despite the virtually unparalleled track record of this legislation in the Senate and its widespread

support in the House, there are some who have concerns which are legitimate concerns, and concerns which we are pleased to address.

In the first place, there are those who have objected to this proposed legislation, arguing that it constitutes what they call a radical deviation from the original purpose of the Social Security Disability Insurance Program. The contention is that the program was originally established for the purpose of partially replacing earnings lost due to the onset of disability. The contention is answered quite adequately, I think—by some of the data which I have already cited, indicating that on balance it is demonstrated that blind persons generally are penalized economically as a result of blindness. The Disability Insurance Program can, therefore, partially compensate them for their lost income—a fact which is entirely in keeping with its original objective.

Moreover, all blind persons (regardless of income) inevitably encounter certain costs involved in competing with persons who have normal vision in a society which is predominately oriented toward the use of sight. Most blind people, it is fair to say, employ sighted readers, drivers, grocery shoppers, and so on. It is not at all uncommon for the costs of employing such persons to run as much as two hundred dollars per month. In addition, there is the matter of purchasing specialized tools and materials. Since Braille books are not high-volume sales items, they are costly. If I need to buy a dictionary for my work, an adequate one will run approximately \$150, while the same book may be purchased for less than ten dollars by an individual who can read the inkprint edition. If I need a calculator for business activities or for keeping my personal accounts in order, the cheapest

one I can get is \$395, while the comparable calculator with a print display which I cannot use may be purchased for approximately \$19.95. The picture is clear, the costs do exist, and the disability insurance legislation which you, Mr. Chairman, have proposed would replace income which we lose as a result of these costs.

Equally responsive to the charge that this legislation proposes a radical deviation from the original purpose of the Disability Insurance Program is the finding that the current incentive structure has brought us to the place where the only actual feeling of long-range economic security belongs to those who do not attempt employment. Clearly, this is not as it should be, and the legislation proposed in H.R. 281 calls for a reversal of this negative incentive structure. If adopted, the new law would reward the efforts of blind Americans to achieve independence and self-sufficiency through employment. No longer would they have to risk the possible economic disadvantages now present in their efforts to enter the labor force. Surely if the Social Security Disability Insurance Program for the Blind is to be directed at meeting the needs of those who are now blind, of those who will become blind, and of the American people as a whole, it must be designed to encourage (rather than discourage) blind beneficiaries to achieve their maximum potential vocationally, and, Mr. Chairman, to the extent that it fails to do this, the system must be changed.

A second point of concern is the matter of cost. Of course, this concern is particularly relevant to the context in which these hearings are being held since financing Social Security is an issue demanding attention by this subcommittee and the Congress. In a report given to the subcommittee by

the Social Security Administration, it is estimated that the long-range cost of adopting H.R. 281 would be 0.35% of taxable payroll, and I think that translates into approximately \$500 million. In arriving at this rough figure, the Social Security Administration has made a guess as to the number of blind persons who would join the ranks of those eligible for disability insurance and calculated approximately what their total benefits might be. Since the average annual benefit paid to individual disability beneficiaries is in the range of \$2,500 annually, we can assume that the Social Security Administration is predicting an additional 150,000 to 200,000 blind disability insurance beneficiaries in order to reach the \$500 million cost estimate. Mr. Chairman, we find such calculations to be unrealistic in the extreme. According to our best estimates (which I think are at least as good as those of Social Security), there might be as many as 50,000 newly eligible blind disability insurance beneficiaries as a result of adopting H.R. 281. If our estimates prove accurate in this regard, the cost in terms of additional benefits would be far less than that predicted by Social Security.

But looking at the cost in terms of additional benefits is only one part (certainly the most negative part) of the total picture. As previously indicated, the overriding objective sought in this legislation is to provide a positive incentive for achieving the fullest employment and productivity of blind Americans. This kind of forward step could certainly not have a negative pricetag attached, since by virtue of their employment blind workers would become taxpayers, thus generating a great deal of additional revenue. By including as a cost factor only additional outlays from the trust funds, Social Security has in effect ignored

the predictable increase in employment of blind Americans, and failed to make an estimate of the additional income which would be generated through employee and employer contributions. Any realistic costs involved in this proposal must account for a sizeable increase in revenues both to the general income tax pool and to the Social Security Disability Trust Funds as well. Furthermore, I would remind you that another department within HEW has estimated that annual income lost due to blindness is probably in the neighborhood of one billion dollars. The fact that this proposal provides a means for recovering much of this loss must not be overlooked.

Additionally, the data presented by Social Security does not acknowledge the fact that some (probably a considerable number) of the seventy-five thousand blind persons now receiving payments through the Supplemental Security Income Program would become eligible for the improved Disability Insurance Plan and thus would become ineligible for future SSI payments. In other words, the result would be a transfer effect for a certain number of blind SSI recipients, and any realistic cost picture must take account of this decrease in expenditures from general revenues. Also, it may be argued that the improved Disability Insurance Plan would mean that some could move from other public assistance and Food Stamp programs to Social Security, resulting in similar cost savings to be reflected in general revenues.

What these arguments suggest is a well-known fact which must be borne in mind when considering this particular proposed legislation. Under our present schemes of Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, and other income maintenance programs, the Congress has adopted a philosophy and developed a system which is

designed to provide at least a subsistence level income for all blind persons in America. The present structure is so organized that the vast majority of blind persons fall into one of three categories: (a) those who are employed and paying taxes; (b) those who are unemployed and beneficiaries of Social Security Disability Insurance; and (c) those who are unemployed and recipients of Supplemental Security Income payments and other welfare grants.

In other words, the present system is structured in such a manner that either a blind person works and helps to pay his own way, or does not work and the rest of society will pay it for him. Legislation such as H.R. 281 recognizes this fact and provides for a maximum utilization of the talents, abilities, and potentials of blind Americans to earn their daily bread and not to expect others to carry the load for them.

Then, too, there has been concern that adopting improvements in disability insurance provisions for the blind would open the door to radical changes for other eligible beneficiaries. This concern is, in part, related to the cost argument just discussed, since it seems to be the concern of some that the removal of various disincentives which now exist will inevitably cost more than it will bring in. We reject that conclusion because of the reasons already stated and we think that the wasted lives of persons who now possess the potential to work but are given every economic reason not to do so cost each and every taxpayer a considerable amount and must be taken in account. At the same time, we recognize the concern, and we want to be responsive to it.

Over a considerable period of time in both the Congress and the state legislatures

as well as the executive branches of government, the unique problems of the blind have been recognized in much sound legislation and regulations providing for specific approaches and special solutions. Never in our experience have the Members of the Congress been unwilling to adopt demonstrated, needed, and meaningful programs which are especially designed to address the problems faced by blind persons simply because someone else may someday want to be involved. In its wisdom the Congress has always recognized that blind citizens in this country face a unique and difficult kind of economic and social discrimination. The Members of the Congress have continuously demonstrated their awareness of the fact that the real problem of blindness stems not so much from any physical lack of ability, but more from a general lack of opportunity and the economic needs of achieving first-class status. With blindness, in contrast to other physical disabilities, the severest loss sustained by a person who is blind is the economic handicap. The economic consequences include the abrupt termination of wages, diminished earning power, drastically curtailed employment opportunities, greatly decreased possibilities for advancement, and limited opportunities for increased earnings once employment has been secured. Again, I emphasize that these consequences are not created by the blind themselves, but by society's attitudes about the blind—the attitudes which make blindness one of the most feared conditions of life, second only to cancer in this regard, according to a recent survey. A few pieces of special legislation have been aimed particularly at overcoming the economic handicap imposed on the blind. An example is the adoption and subsequent amendments to the Randolph-Sheppard Act, giving blind persons a priority in the establishment and operation of vending facilities on all Federal

property. More relevant to our consideration here today is the fact that various provisions of title II and title XVI of the Social Security Act regard blindness as a different condition and treat it separately from other disabilities. Also, the special needs and unique problems of the blind have often been recognized at the state level where many of the state legislatures have established specific agencies in the state (such as commissions for the blind) to deal with the problems of the visually impaired. None of this enlightened effort on the part of policymakers has ever to our knowledge resulted in a loud clamor by others to be included, but even so, the supposition that it might happen in some future case should not be used as an excuse for failing to act when action seems most indicated.

These, Mr. Chairman, are the main questions which tend to arise when considering the merits of your proposal embodied in H.R. 281. For many years, the blind of this country and those who are seeking to assist them have recognized that the arguments set forth here are both morally and practically sound. In six previous Congresses the Members of the United States Senate have voiced their agreement. Similarly, a sizeable number of the Members of the House of Representatives have rallied to the support

of this positive step forward for blind citizens. Now, for the seventh time this proposal comes before the Congress for its serious consideration and hoped-for adoption. Those who are most knowledgeable in the field believe that the time is now at hand for a new era of opportunity in the lives of the blind of this Nation.

The blind as a group are prepared to work and work hard. The legislation which we commend to your attention constitutes an effort on our part to renounce our traditionally established lives of demeaning dependency and subordinate status. This legislation also expresses our courageous determination to escape from many long decades of captivity during which we have been constrained by society's ignorance, myths, and misconceptions. We seek only today to free ourselves from this captivity of ignorance, prejudice, and discrimination, and we ask for only the opportunity to lead normal, self-supporting, self-dependent lives. For our part, Mr. Chairman, we are committed to making provisions of H.R. 281 an effective instrument of rehabilitation, self-help, and self-support of the blind. All we ask is your support in your affirmation of these principles in guiding this legislation into public law. □

GURMANKIN DECISION IS APPEALED BUT HAS BEGUN TO BE USED AS A PRECEDENT

The Gurmankin Federal Court decision in Philadelphia finding violations of the U.S. Constitution and Section 504 of the Federal Vocational Rehabilitation Act in the refusal to hire blind teachers by the Philadelphia School District has been appealed to the Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit.

According to Jonathan Stein, Esquire, counsel for Ms. Gurmankin at Community Legal Services in Philadelphia, the district judge on May 19 denied the School District's motion to stay or postpone the injunction order despite the appeal. Thus, unless the Circuit Court grants a stay, the School District must offer Ms. Gurmankin a secondary school English teacher position with seniority back to September 1970.

The decision is already being used as a precedent in various areas of the Nation: a vice-principal in Newark, New Jersey, on

becoming blind recently was demoted to a guidance counselor position—his attorney is now considering litigation; an attorney in Philadelphia is using the decision in another Federal Court suit on behalf of an epileptic woman seeking a lab technician job; and the U.S. Justice Department Civil Rights Division is using the decision in a Virginia Federal Court on behalf of a claim to a special education by handicapped students.

Mr. Stein is anxious to hear from any members who have had any past contact or who have ever considered teaching with the Philadelphia public school system, as the *Gurmankin* case is being brought as a class action and can benefit many other blind individuals qualified to teach in the schools there. Also, if anyone is now considering the possibilities of teaching in the Philadelphia public schools, they should contact Mr. Stein directly at (215) 893-5378. □

MISSOURI CONVENTION

BY

JANA SIMS

The St. Louis Chapter ably hosted the 1976 Missouri convention at the Downtown Holiday Inn in St. Louis, April 23-25. The convention festivities began with an enthusiastic crowd in the hospitality room Friday night. We were well entertained by the talents of several of our musical members.

Convention business began with a board meeting early Saturday morning. At this time we discussed the temporary name

change necessitated by the present stage of the suit brought by the Missouri ACB affiliate against us. It seems that the Missouri Federation of the Blind has so little pride in its ACB affiliation that it will not change its name to Missouri Council of the Blind and must try to prevent us from showing any connection with the NFB in our name. We may not for the present use "Federation," "Blind," and "Missouri" in any combination, so we are for now The National

Blind. However, we are determined that even if our affiliation with NFB can't be put on paper in our State, all our work and actions will prove to all that we are National Federationists to the core.

Our convention was well attended this year. Ralph Sanders, NFB Second Vice President, and Dick Edlund, NFB Treasurer, were present, as were guests from Kansas. Ralph Sanders opened our program—ably assisted by Dick Edlund—with an encouraging and inspiring report on our achievements throughout the country. Ralph reminded us that even though the particular problems of each state or local seem to them the toughest, these problems are the problems of all Federationists. We are all the Federation working to tear down discrimination and misunderstanding bit by bit every day each in his own area and in his own way, but all of us together in the Federation.

Various committee reports finished out the morning. In the afternoon our major speaker was Charles Freeman, Chief, Bureau for the Blind. He talked to us about the progress in Bureau services over the past year, and with the assistance of three staff members—Keith Johnson, employment specialist from Springfield; Mary Houston and Art Leindecker out of the Jefferson City office—spent some time fielding questions we had on Bureau programs and policies. The highlight of Mr. Freeman's presentation was the announcement that the Missouri Services for the Blind had been removed from Family Services in our umbrella agency and returned to bureau status, giving it more equality with other departments and a little more autonomy. We passed some resolutions concerning the Bureau during the convention. One drawn up by several of our college students concerned a request that the Bureau publish a hand-

book for blind students, spelling out to them exactly which services they are and are not entitled to.

Maggie Goetz of Kansas City and Lori Winters of St. Louis explained the various programs of the American Red Cross concerned with the blind.

Our banquet was one of the convention highlights. Our master of ceremonies, Sue Mathies, kept the program moving with her bright wit and charm. Ralph Sanders again inspired everyone with an excellent speech. Among the noted guests at the banquet were Missouri State Senator and Mrs. Donald Gralick from St. Louis, who showed great interest in the blind and their problems. Maggie Goetz received the Jacobus tenBroek Award for outstanding service to the blind. Ethel (Tiny) Beedle, for her active participation and service in the Federation, was given the Kenneth Jernigan Award for outstanding blind person of 1976. The evening was rounded off by a lively dance and the drawing of many door prizes, including two engraved Bicentennial plaques worth two hundred dollars. During Saturday night's festivities, a new drink, "NAC on the Rocks," was created in honor of the approaching demonstration against the NAC accreditation team at the Kansas City Association for the Blind. Should anyone want the recipe for this new creation, contact the Missouri affiliate and we will gladly provide it.

The Sunday morning business session concluded the convention. Several resolutions were passed, including one deploring the Kansas City Association's reaccreditation with NAC and supporting the demonstration to be held the following day. Another requested Bell Telephone to consider a means by which employed blind

persons could avoid the charge for directory assistance for their business calls. Our four chapters present reported on their activities and it was most interesting to see what had been accomplished in the various communities. Certainly the Missouri affiliate is rapidly growing in numbers and activities. Our legislative report was not all we had hoped. A late start and short session meant the failure of our White Cane Law to pass before the end of this session of the Legislature. However, this year it got out of Senate Committee, which has not happened before. Our sponsors have promised us

early action next session and we intend to work towards this end.

Two constitutional changes were also made. One changed our name; the other raised the percentage of sighted members allowed, in accordance with the national NFB constitution. Our convention closed with the selection of Kansas City as the 1977 convention site, and by the filling of two vacancies on the board. George Rittgers was elected second vice president, and Danny Williams of St. Louis was elected a member at large. □

MINNESOTA CONVENTION

BY

CURTIS CHONG

The National Federation of the Blind of Minnesota held its most exciting annual convention on the weekend of May 29-31 at the Leamington Hotel in downtown Minneapolis. Ralph Sanders and his wife Judy did an outstanding job representing our national office.

The Saturday afternoon session began with a discussion of special education of the blind in Minnesota. Mr. Gene Mamenga, Executive Director for Governmental Relations of the Minnesota Education Association, talked about the legislatively approved transfer of the Minnesota Braille and Sight-Saving School. As of July 1, 1977, the school will be transferred from the State Department of Public Welfare to the Department of Education. The blind will have a greater voice in the affairs of the school because of an advisory council which the Department is required to create. Two positions on that council must be filled by persons representing the interests of the blind.

An excellent report on the Federation nationally was presented by Ralph Sanders. He urged everyone to sign up for the PAC plan. "Think of what it would mean to your life," he said, "if there were suddenly no National Federation of the Blind, no *Braille Monitor*, no lawsuits, and no Washington representative."

A panel discussion pertaining to the Minnesota vending stand program was ably moderated by Andy Virden. Panel participants were Mike O'Day, vending facility operator; Ralph Worrall, now retired from the Business Enterprises Program of State Services for the Blind; and Ralph Sanders, the Director of Blind Industries and Services of Maryland. It was agreed that Minnesota still has a long way to go in terms of abolishing set-asides and expanding the program to include large cafeteria operations.

Saturday evening was devoted to a number of mini-workshops on public relations, membership, finance, and our State publication, the *Minnesota Bulletin*.

The Sunday program included a panel discussion on new perspectives in the employment of the blind, moderated by Tom Scanlan. The panel members agreed that although we as blind people have made substantial progress in employment, discrimination continues to be a serious problem.

Mr. C. Stanley Potter, Director of State Services for the Blind, discussed his views on priorities in work with the blind. Despite the fact that the NFB of Minnesota was instrumental in securing enough State dollars to enable the agency to take advantage of its full share of Federal funds, the agency has remained unresponsive to the needs of the blind. Too often, its counselors have demonstrated paternalistic attitudes toward blind clients. Ralph Sanders, speaking as an agency director and an active participant in the organized blind movement, pointed out that in the name of neutrality, too many agency directors across the country were afraid to take a stand. Too many agencies, lacking a true belief in the ability of the blind to determine the direction of their own lives, attempt to tell their clients what they should do rather than letting the clients decide for themselves.

Blind students in Minnesota continue to believe that special college programs for the blind are detrimental to the independence of blind students. This was clearly demonstrated by a panel discussion which highlighted the problems inherent in such programs.

Tremendous enthusiasm, high spirits, rededication to the movement, and unity of purpose: these were the outstanding features of our annual convention banquet, held on Sunday night. The most outstanding feature of all was the keynote address, presented by our national Second Vice President, Ralph Sanders.

On Monday morning, we learned that we are finally ready to go to trial in our lawsuit against the Minneapolis Society for the Blind. However, the Society is not. They say they have to take more depositions. Yet in the past three-and-a-half years, the Society has taken depositions from only two people; and this was quite some time ago. We will not permit any further delaying tactics. We expect to be in court within the year.

Four resolutions were unanimously adopted by the convention. The first called for higher quality education of the blind in the public schools, including training in Braille and cane travel. The second called for a reorganization of the Federation in Minnesota into a single statewide-membership affiliate. The third called for one-third representation by elected representatives of the blind on any advisory committee established for State Services for the Blind. The fourth resolution broadened our scholarship program to benefit needy blind students.

Everyone went away from this year's convention with renewed dedication to the movement. □

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

BY

JOHN ZUSKA

WATERMELON PICKLES

Start with four pounds of watermelon rind. The pickles are more attractive if some red is left on the rind. Make a brine with two quarts of water and one cup of salt. Soak the rinds overnight. Drain and wash the rinds and place them in a pan. Cover them with water and boil for five or six minutes, until the rinds are soft; then drain.

Make a syrup of: four cups of sugar, two cups of vinegar, eight sticks of cinnamon, three tablespoons of mustard seed, and four teaspoons of cloves. Heat this to boiling and then cook the rinds at a simmer until they are transparent, or about fifteen minutes. Put at once into sterilized jars. □

MONITOR MINIATURES

"Independence! A new way of life for the blind of Illinois" will be the theme of the Eighth Annual Convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Illinois. Everyone is invited to attend this convention September 10-12, 1976, at the Kankakee Motor Inn, 225 East Merchant Street, Kankakee, Illinois 60901; telephone (815) 933-4411. Room rates are: singles—\$13; doubles—\$17; triples—\$20; and quads—\$22. A registration fee of three dollars and banquet reservations at seven dollars each may be sent to Allen Schaefer, Box 141, Mazon, Illinois 60444.

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During the latter half of April, death claimed three outstanding Federationists in Massachusetts: John F. Nagle on the

15th; Charles W. Little on the 16th; and Raoul J. Goguen on the 30th. The accomplishments of John Nagle and Charles Little at the national, State, and local levels in the Federation and numerous other fields are well known to most readers. While Raoul Goguen may not have achieved national distinction, his impact on the lives and affairs of blind residents of Massachusetts was great indeed. He was an active member of the Boston organization which eventually became the nucleus of the State's NFB affiliate. In 1948, almost singlehandedly, he organized the Worcester Chapter, and served as its president for a number of years. In the meantime he also became State president, and took an important part in organizing several other chapters. Besides being an accomplished pianist and organist, he also worked in private industry during

World War II. All three of these Massachusetts men will be long remembered and greatly missed.

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The following is part of a report from Hazel Staley, president of the NFB of North Carolina: "The 1973 Rehabilitation Act requires the state agencies providing rehabilitation services to have input from consumers and providers of service. Accordingly, I spent April 21-23 in Atlanta with other consumers and providers of service devising a state plan for securing such input. This meeting was for Region 4, which consists of North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Alabama, Kentucky, and Mississippi. There were general sessions, and then the representatives from each state met together to work on their own state's plan. Other representatives from North Carolina were Earl Jennings and Mike Haswell from the Division of Services and Myrtle Garriss and Marvin Gatlin representing their consumer groups. One representative from the regional office was assigned to each group as an advisor and general helper. Although the discussions in our group became somewhat heated at times, there was an excellent spirit of cooperation and it was, all in all, a very productive meeting. The plan that we devised is as follows: There will be a committee composed of the presidents and vice presidents of the NFB of North Carolina, the North Carolina Council of the Blind, the North Carolina Association of Workers for the Blind, and the executive director of the Lions Association (providers of service), making a nine-member committee. This committee will meet periodically in various parts of the State, giving even broader opportunity for input from consumers and providers of service. Before it is imple-

mented, this plan will have to be approved by the State and the Department of HEW. We noted several areas in which we felt our State agency needs some improvement. Among these were: a job placement unit to improve employment opportunities for the blind of the State; hiring only concerned and well qualified social workers and rehab counselors, not just people who can't find anything else to do; some kind of continuity when one worker leaves (for whatever reason) and another worker assumes the case load. The committee would be funded by contributions from each of the organizations, matched by Federal funds. Even if our plan is approved, it may take several months to implement it."

* * * * *

The Social Security system has been in operation for forty years. Some thirty-two million Americans are drawing benefits. The program is not on the brink of bankruptcy. There is concern that the Social Security Trust Fund is being depleted because it is now paying out in benefits more than it is taking in in taxes. Another problem is that New York City and many other municipalities have given notice that they are planning to withdraw from the system, and the State of California is considering the withdrawal of its 200,000 current employees. This year benefit payments of \$78.2 billion will be over \$4 billion more than income from Social Security taxes, but the system is as sound as the United States Government. The system, although greatly liberalized and expanded since it began, still relies basically on the Social Security tax. The employer and the employee each pay currently 5.85 percent of a worker's earnings up to a wage base of \$15,300 a year. What to do to bridge this gap between income and outgo? President

gap between income and outgo? President Ford proposes to raise the Social Security tax to 6.15 percent on employer and employee alike, starting in 1977. Since the tax is repressive and hits the small wage earner much harder than the large wage earner, there are two chief alternative solutions to that suggested by the President—either raise the wage base to, say, \$25,000, or finance benefits partly out of general tax revenues. It seems probable that the Congress may take at least part of both alternatives.

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The Federal minimum wage for most of the 57.4 million workers covered by the law increased to \$2.30 an hour on last January 1st. The vast majority of workers covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act, more than 53 million, are already earning more than the new minimum. Under the Act, handicapped workers in sheltered workshops must be paid at least 50 percent of the prevailing minimum wage.

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The White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals has brailled and recorded the State White House Conference Workbook. The workbook includes messages to State White House Conference delegates, an overview of the White House Conference,

definitions, roles and responsibilities of delegates to State conferences, White House Conference topics and summaries of the twenty-five awareness papers and issues. These materials are to be used at the state and national conferences. Single copies of the recorded discs (approximately six hours of listening) or press Braille (approximately six hundred pages) are available from your White House Conference State Director or from Betty Ann Jones, Coordinator of Materials Production for the Blind, White House Conference on Handicapped Individuals, 1832 "M" Street, Northwest, Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036.

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Call Board: Blind Men and Women Living in the New York Area! Attention Please! Do you enjoy acting or singing? If so, why not join ELBEE, a troupe of blind and sighted amateur repertory players? In September we open our fifteenth season of dramatic reading productions of major plays and musical scenes. No dramatic experience necessary, but you should have a good speaking voice or singing voice. No memorizing of lines, but you should be a fast Braille reader. Rehearsals once a week; performances, twenty a season. If you are interested in creative self-expression through drama and song, please call: David Swerdlow at TRafalgar 4-5704. □

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